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ABSTRACT

The Philippines has modeled its higher education system almost totally upon the American model, with similarities in organization, degrees, curricula, teaching methods, governance, and faculty roles. The University of the Philippines was established in 1908, and between 1901 and 1926, eight regional normal schools were established to train public school teachers. In 1949 the Philippine Normal College became a four-year institution and began to grant bachelors' degrees. By 1947, there were 309 college-level institutions, of which 294 were private. Currently, most of the state institutions and many of the private colleges include high school components and postsecondary vocational schools, and in many cases, elementary schools, due to the practice of extending existing institutions to the college level. Almost half of the public institutions were established, or had collegiate components added, since 1966. During the period of rule by decree, President Marcos made marked changes in public higher education. In come cases, several schools were combined under one administration to form a college or university. Limitations in the development of universities include funding problems and lack of faculty with graduate degrees. (SW)

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PHILIPPINE HIGHER EDUCATION

Expansion in the Public Sector

Topical Paper 8501

Higher Education Series

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PHILIPPINE HIGHER EDUCATION: EXPANSION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

V. R. Cardozier*

The American undergraduate college was based on the English college, and about a century ago American colleges began to grow into universities with graduate programs based on the German model.

During the last two decades, higher education in most developed countries and some less developed countries has undergone considerable transformation. Many of them have adopted selected aspects of the American model. But, the only country whose higher education system was modeled almost totally upon the American model is the Republic of the Philippines.

This was a natural, and indeed perhaps inevitable, consequence of almost a half century of American presence in the Philippines. During this period, roughly the first half of the 20th century, American officials there established public institutions that formed the core of what later became public colleges and universities.

In structure, organization, degrees, curricula, teaching methods, governance, faculty roles, and in other ways higher education in the Philippines resembled that in America as it grew and developed, in private as well as public institutions. This was further assured when, in 1902, the Americans required

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The author is grateful to Mr. S. B. Bangug, secretary-treasurer of the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges who arranged visits to several colleges and universities in the Philippines in 1983, and whose "Profiles of Philippines State Universities and Colleges in the '80s" provided much of the data for this paper.

that all teaching in colleges and universities be in the English language including that in established institutions which had previously taught in the Spanish language.

The Spanish, who occupied the Philippines as a colonial power for three and one-third centuries, established several private colleges and universities but no tax supported higher education. The Spanish-American War of 1898 centered on Cuba but it also resulted in the U. S. displacing the Spanish in the Philippines. As soon as hostilities subsided, the U. S. set about establishing free public elementary and secondary education and developing plans for self government.

By 1901, the United States government had established elections of local municipal officials and a national legislature. In 1934 the American Congress approved Commonwealth status for the islands with complete independence to come in 1946. In 1935 the Philippine people approved a constitution and became a Commonwealth and on July 4, 1946, the country gained complete independence.

From the beginning, United States policy emphasized the importance of literacy. Soldiers who had battled in the Philippines in 1898 became teachers and later more than 1,000 civilian teachers were brought from the U. S. to the islands to staff the newly established public elementary schools.

The development of higher education came more slowly. The University of the Philippines was established in 1908, and in 1909 its College of Agriculture 40 miles southeast of Manila was added. Although teachers from the U. S. staffed the public schools initially, the American government recognized the need for a trained cadre of Filipino teachers and in 1901 established Philippine Normal School (in Manila), which is today the Philippine Normal College. Between 1901 and 1926, eight regional normal

schools were established to train teachers for the public schools. Initially, all nine of the normal schools accepted elementary school graduates to prepare for teaching. In 1928, the Philippine Normal School began to accept only secondary school graduates for two years of teacher preparation and later all of the other eight normal schools followed.

Except for the University of the Philippines, the only baccalaureate degree granting institutions up until World War II were private institutions. In 1949, the Philippine Normal College became a four-year institution and began to grant bachelors' degrees.

The major emphasis in education during the American presence in the Philippines was on elementary and secondary education and particularly occupational preparation. Beginning in 1901, farm schools, technical and trade schools, rural high schools, and other vocational schools were established throughout the islands. Most of these included elementary and secondary programs but some also offered post-secondary vocational training of less-than-college level.

In the Philippines, public higher education developed slowly and late. As noted, the University of the Philippines was the only bachelor's degree granting public institution until 1949 when the Philippine Normal College became a four-year institution. In addition to the private colleges and universities established during the Spanish reign -- all by religious orders -- a considerable number of private colleges was established during the American period (1898-1946). Most of them closed during the Japanese occupation in World War II but reopened soon after liberation.

The pent-up demand for college education at the end of World War II resulted in the rapid establishment of private colleges. Some of these were established by religious groups but some were established as non-sectarian institu-

tions including a number as profit making ventures. As in America, many of these were business schools and other occupationally oriented schools, but some of them were liberal arts and general institutions. Many of the general and liberal arts colleges, universities, medical schools, law schools and other institutions that make up the higher education system of the country were established for profit. But the profit-making potential of general and liberal arts institutions is declining.

Dr. Arthur L. Carson, longtime President of Silliman University in Dumaguete City, has pointed out that a Congressional Commission on Education reported in 1948 that most of the private collegiate level institutions were weak, underfunded, understaffed and some were outright frauds. Two-thirds had less than 200 students each and half had less than 100 students.(1)

Another report stated that:

> The UNESCO Consultative Educational Mission in 1949 noted the indiscriminate admission of unqualified students, inferior curricula of little value, passing of inferior students to continue fees, use of low paid part-time instructors, overloading of courses to put students through quickly and unethical rivalry among schools for student business. The offering of so-called higher education on this low grade basis is an imposition on an education hungry people.(2)

There had been 92 prewar colleges and universities in the Philippines; by the academic year 1947-48 there were 309 college level institutions of which 294 were private. The hunger for higher education in the late 1940s gave rise to the explosion of new colleges but it also persuaded the national government that it must expand state-supported higher education. Even so, as

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[1] Arthur L. Carson, Higher Education in the Philippines, Bulletin 1961, No. 29, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C., p. 115.

[2] Ibid, p. 115.

recent as 1959, some 90 percent of the college level enrollment was in private institutions.

In 1952, the Philippine Legislature began to convert existing rural high schools, farm schools, trade schools and other established schools into colleges and universities. In most cases, it was not a matter of conversion but rather an extension. Today most of the state institutions and, indeed, many of the private colleges include high school components and post secondary vocational schools and, in many cases, elementary schools, as well, due to the practice of extending existing institutions to the college level.

The addition of college level programs to existing subcollegiate public institutions continued through the 1960s. It gained its greatest impetus with the election of Ferdinand Marcos as President in 1966. Almost half of the public institutions were established, or had collegiate components added since Marcos took office. In 1972, as his 6 year term as President was nearing its end, Marcos declared martial law and ruled by decree until January 1981 when the country returned to constitutional government. During the period of rule by decree, Marcos made marked changes in public higher education. In some cases, several schools were brought together under one administration to form a college or university level institution. Most of them continued their original programs -- agriculture high school, trade or technical school, high school, fisheries school, etc., and combined them with bachelor's degree granting institutions.

One good example was the establishment of Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University in La Union Province, some 150 miles northwest of Manila. Named for the father of President Marcos, the institution started in 1960 as

an agriculture school (subcollegiate), and in 1968 became a four-year college of agriculture. In 1974 it became a state college offering agriculture, forestry, fisheries and industrial technology. In 1981, by Presidential decree, the institution was renamed Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University and includes the original agricultural school, where the present administrative headquarters is located, but brought into the institution the following: the La Union School of Arts and Trades in San Fernando, some 10 miles from the main campus, became the College of Engineering and Technology; the former community college in La Union became the College of Liberal Arts which, in addition to baccalaureate programs, continues to offer several non-degree programs; the Southern Ilocos Polytechnic State College, which had earlier absorbed the Southern La Union National School in Agoo, became the College of Arts and Sciences in Agoo, some 20 miles south of the main campus (SIPSC had earlier absorbed a fisheries school and an agriculture school which became branches of DMMMSU College of Fisheries and College of Agriculture, respectively); and the Sapilang Elementary School. In 1979, the Balaon School of Fisheries with campuses at Paraoir, Balaon and La Union were integrated into the institution. DMMMSU now has a total of seven campuses.

Another example of integrating several institutions under one institutional identity and with a single administration is Pangasinan State University, also north of Manila. In 1978, by Presidential decree the following schools and colleges were merged: Central Luzon Teachers College in Bayambang, Eastern Pangasinan Agricultural College in Sta. Maria, Pangasinan School of Arts and Trades in Lingayen, Pangasinan College of Fisheries in Binmaley, Asingan School of Arts and Trades in Asingan, Speaker Eugenio Perez National

Agricultural School in San Carlos City, and the Western Pangasinan College of Agriculture in Infanta.

Bicol University in Legaspi City, south of Manila, was established in 1969, bringing together a teachers college, an elementary school, a high school, a regional school of arts and trades, an agriculture school, and a school of fisheries. Two years later a college of arts and sciences, a college of engineering and a graduate school were organized and in 1973 a college of nursing was added. The University is spread out in seven campuses.

Isabela State University, which is located some 250 miles northeast of Manila in the Cagayan Valley, was established by Presidential Decree in 1978 by merging six schools and colleges scattered over a wide area: Isabela State College of Agriculture (Echague), which began as a farm school in 1923; Cagayan Valley Institute of Technology (Cabagan), which grew out of the Cabagan National Agricultural School and operates on three campuses; the Isabela School of Arts and Trades (Ilagan) which grew out of a handicrafts school established by Americans in 1908; Jones Agricultural High School (Jones); Roxas Agricultural and Industrial School (Roxas); and the San Mateo Vocational and Technical School (San Mateo). These, along with others, illustrate the variety of institutions assembled under one university umbrella and their geographic distribution.

While in each university, the components continue on their original campuses, they come under a centralized administration and enjoy privileges not available before. Several of the original components were of less-than-college level and continue to offer such programs. In most cases, however, they were authorized in the Presidential Decree establishing the university to offer collegiate level studies.

Several other newly established or merged universities resemble in some ways American universities with branch campuses and in some cases the degree of autonomy resembles small American systems of institutions. Clearly the effort is to bring together an assortment of isolated and specialized schools providing a wide variety of training, under a single administration, and to expand the entire institution aggressively, with the aim of meeting occupational needs of students and employers and, in particular, the needs of the area where each is located. While liberal arts and sciences are offered, the emphasis is on programs that have occupational utility, particularly agriculture, engineering, fisheries, nursing, medicine, law and business administration.

Of the nine normal schools established during the early American period to train teachers, all have become senior colleges or universities or have been merged into universities and grant bachelors' and masters' degrees. Only the Philippine Normal College in Manila retains the term "Normal" in its title but it now grants not only the master's degree, but also the Ed.D. in educational administration and the Ph.D. in linguistics, in cooperation with two private universities. Five of the nine original normal schools now offer the Doctor of Education degree.

As recently as 1978, 83 percent of the college enrollment in the Philippines was in private institutions.(3) If the government continues to build and expand colleges and universities, that percentage will likely

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[3]"The Philippine Educational System: An Overview in the Context of Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and Oceania", paper delivered by Dr. Almado C. Dizon, Executive Vice President of the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities, at the UNESCO Conference on Higher Education, New Delhi, November 12-16, 1979.

decline. With the highest birthrate in Southeast Asia, the population of the Philippines has grown from some 19 million at the end of World War II to 50 million in 1983. Despite government efforts to curb population growth, demographers expect it to continue to expand rapidly, which means continuing demand for higher education.

There is not the same kind of shift from private to public higher education in the Philippines as in the U. S. due, in part, to the fact that the difference in cost between the two is often very small. All of the private institutions exist largely, if not soley, on tuition income but are able to maintain low tuition through heavy teaching loads (fulltime faculty in private and public institutions average 18 classroom hours per week and in some cases up to 24 hours), large classes (average undergraduate classes of 40), and using part-time teachers, who are paid modest stipends.

Except for the University of the Philippines, few of the public colleges and universities enjoy high prestige. Considering the fact that many of them became collegiate institutions only a few years ago, this is not difficult to understand.

One of the major handicaps in the development of universities, public and private, is a lack of faculty with graduate degrees. Several institutions could be used to illustrate this problem; Bicol University in Legaspi City, south of Manila, is a good example. In 1979-80, it had 508 faculty of whom 10 held the doctorate, 94 held masters' degrees and 404 held bachelors' degrees.

There are exceptions. Cebu State College, formerly Cebu Normal School and one of the eight original normal schools established during the American period, had a faculty of 57 in 1979, of which 19 held the doctorate, 33 the master's degree and five the bachelor's degree. In 1982-83, almost all

of the top administration held doctorates, including several from American universities (Vice President for Academic Affairs, Ph.D., Indiana University; principal of the secondary school, Ph.D., New York University). But in most institutions, fewer than 10 percent hold the doctorate and 75 percent or more hold the bachelor's degree only. Some of the colleges and universities have programs to identify undergraduates with potential for teaching, have them take special courses during their senior year and appoint them to faculty positions upon completion of the B.A. or B.S. degree.

The University of the Philippines is in a category all by itself with respect to degrees, salaries, quality, etc. In 1979, 446 of its faculty held the doctorate (not including medical and dental faculty), 1,029 held masters' degrees and 976 held bachelors' degrees. These included faculty on the Agriculture Campus at Los Banos, as well as the main campus in Quezon City. At the Agriculture Campus, 210 held the doctorate, 191 held masters' degrees and 349 held bachelors' degrees. Most of the doctoral degree holders received their training in the United States. The Agriculture College at Los Banos is considered by many to be the best in southeast Asia.

Another handicap is funding. While the Federal government has made sharp increases in funding for public colleges and universities, the Philippines is a poor country and funds provided are deficient in comparison with developed countries. While many of the public institutions have been so recently established or merged that it is difficult to make comparisons, the funding can be sensed by examination of one institution. West Visayas State College in Iloilo City, Panay, in the fall semester 1979 had 1661 undergraduates, 510 master's, 34 Ed.D. students, and 222 students (111 men, 111 women) in its medical school. It had 120 pre-elementary, 601 elementary and 343 high school students. The faculty (excluding elementary and high school) consisted of five with the Ph.D., 51 with masters' degrees, 67 with bachelors' degrees

and 24 with M.D. Degrees. The college operating budget totaled 8,870,000 pesos of which P493,000 was budgeted for the elementary and secondary schools. In January 1979, the exchange rate was 7.3 pesos to the U. S. dollar; thus the operating budget for the college was about $1,147,424.

The 1983 operating budget (funding is on a calendar year basis) was P13,032,000, exclusive of capital appropriations. In January 1983, the exchange rate was approximately 9.55 pesos to the dollar, meaning that the 1983 operating appropriation for WVSC was about $1,371,789, however, by July 1983 the exchange rate was P11.00 to $1.00.

One of the most serious problems is in library collections. Only a few college level texts have been published to date in the Philippines (although the government has urged faculty to write them), which means that colleges and universities must import most of their library collections. The exchange rate, the disadvantaged position of the Philippines in foreign trade, and lack of funds make it very difficult for institutions to build library collections. The cost of a science textbook is likely to be greater than the monthly salary of a groundskeeper or custodian. Were it not for paperback reprints from Taiwan, the situation would be worse. The majority of college and university libraries have fewer than 50,000 volumes. In recognition of the difficulty of building libraries, the Ministry of Education and Culture requires only 10,000 volumes in the library, along with other criteria, for an institution to be classified as a university.

All higher education in the Philippines is subject to actions by the Ministry of Education and Culture. By law, not only public institutions but private colleges and universities must secure approval of the Ministry to offer programs, degrees, courses and the like. The private institutions complain that they must submit all of their proposals to the Ministry of

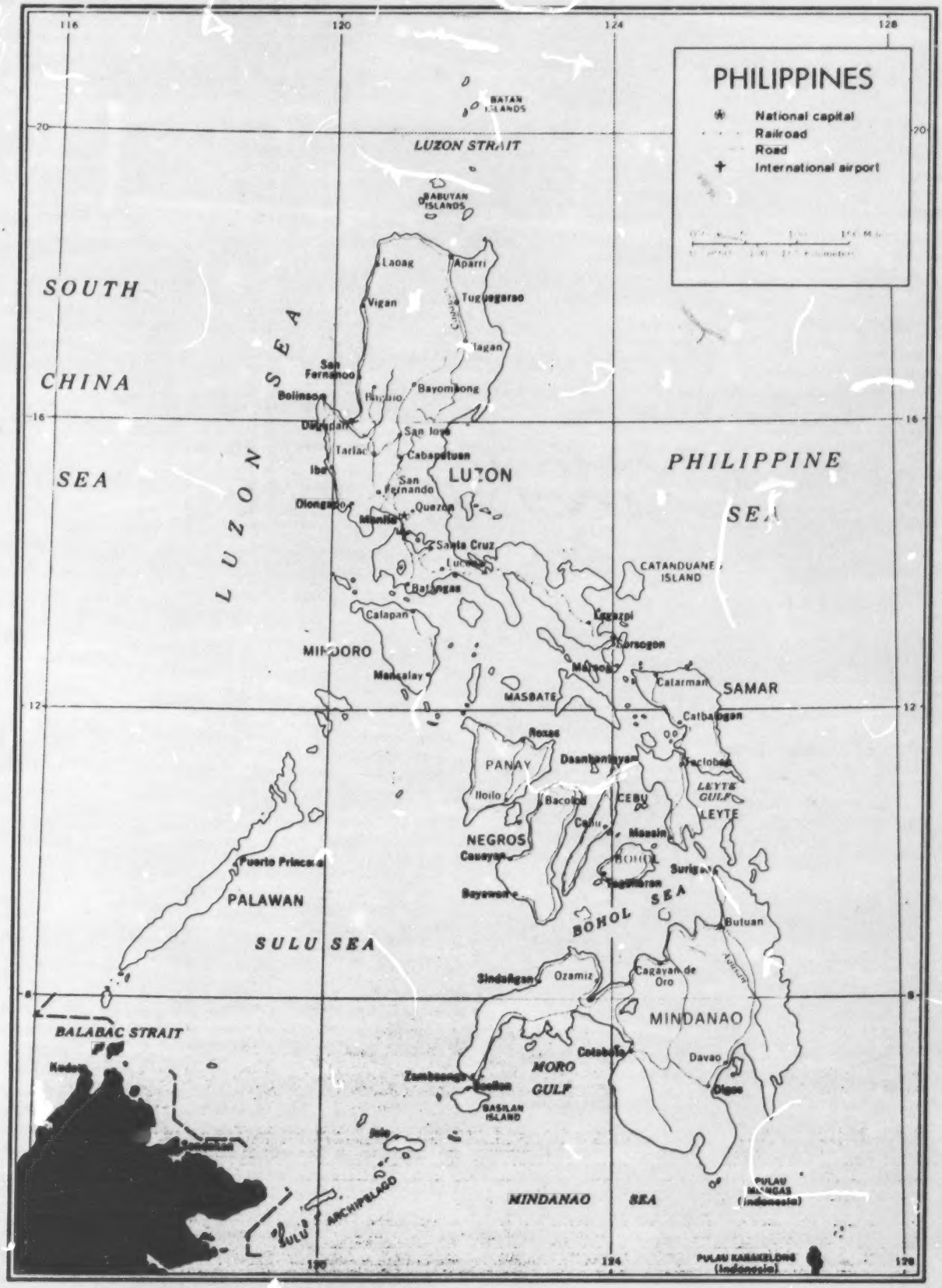
Education and Culture for approval while public colleges and universities can avoid doing so, on certain questions, if they can persuade the national assembly to legislate the matter. Yet the role of the Ministry vis-a-vis private institutions came about because of the large number of private colleges of questionable academic quality developed after World War II.

As in most developing countries, there is wide variation in quality among colleges and universities in the Philippines. Except for a few institutions, both public and private colleges and universities in the Philippines have considerable distance to go to achieve academic standards comparable to those found in institutions of industrialized countries. One needs to remember, however, that the Republic of the Philippines gained independence less than 40 years ago. The development and maturation of a single college or university takes time and for a complete national system of higher education to develop and mature takes a great deal of time.

The growing enrollment in colleges and universities in the Philippines is indicative of the high regard its people have for education and the desire to improve themselves. Education, long the key to upward social and economic mobility in the United States, is clearly seen in the same way by many Filipinos.

The commitment of the national government to expansion and development of its public colleges and universities, especially in the last two decades, and the large share of the national budget allotted to higher education bodes well for the future of higher education in the Philippines. Clearly, the government sees public higher education as a major element in the economic, social and cultural development of the country.

The Philippines will, for a very considerable time to come, need to rely on private higher education, but there is good reason to expect public higher education to assume a growing share of the responsibility for providing tertiary education for the youth of the country.



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